

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8234
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRUSSELS 15189

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, BE, CG
SUBJ: SIMONET'S VISIT TO ZAIRE

REF: A) KINSHASA 8377, B) STATE 192131

1. SUMMARY. BELGIANS EXPRESS "SATISFACTION" WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET'S VISIT TO KINSHASA AND HIS MEETINGS WITH MOBUTU, STRESSING THAT ATMOSPHERICS AND WELCOME WERE POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY WHILE NEITHER SIDE "CHANGED THE OTHER'S MIND" ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE. CLEAREST POSITIVE RESULT OF THE VISIT APPEARS TO BE THE CLEARING OF THE AIR BETWEEN MOBUTU AND SIMONET AND RENEWED DETERMINATION ON THE PART OF THE BELGIANS TO BE EXTRA-RESPONSIVE TO ZAIRIAN SENSITIVITIES. MOBUTU ASKS BELGIUM TO CONTINUE ACTIVE LEADERSHIP WITH MOBUTU PLAN SCENARIO, WHILE TALKS
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FOCUS ON ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL - RATHER THAN POLITICAL - REFORMS. KING HASSAN IS EXPECTED TO RAISE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FOR PAN-AFRICAN FORCE IN HIS AUGUST 4 MEETING WITH SIMONET. END SUMMARY.

2. WE MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET'S DEPUTY CHEF DE CABINET, ANDRE ONKELINX AUGUST 4, AND GOT A FULL READ-

OUT ON SIMONET'S JULY 31-AUGUST 2 VISIT TO KINSHASA AND MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU. EMBASSY KINSHASA'S INITIAL REPORT (REF A) BASED ON SIMONET-CAHEN-ONKELINX MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR CUTLER REFLECTS WHAT ONKELINX TOLD US TODAY. THIS MESSAGE THEREFORE WILL BE CONFINED TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY ONKELINX, INCLUDING ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE DEPARTMENT (REF B), AND BELGIAN REFLECTIONS ON THE SIMONET VISIT.

3. BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS. MOBUTU, FOREIGN MINISTER UMBA AND OTHER ZAIRIAN OFFICIALS UNLOADED ON SIMONET AND PARTY ALL OF THE HANG-UPS, PROBLEMS AND IRRITANTS THAT HAVE LATELY BEEN POISONING BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS AND THEREBY INHIBITING WESTERN COORDINATION OF POLICY TOWARDS ZAIRE. ONKELINX SAID THAT MOBUTU TOLD SIMONET "YOU (THE BELGIANS) CONTRIBUTE TO THE DETERIORATION OF ZAIRE'S REPUTATION IN THE WORLD". HE DESCRIBED TO SIMONET IN DETAIL FIVE PROBLEM AREAS IN BELGIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS:

--- "HOSTILITY" TOWARDS GOZ FROM BELGIAN GROUPS AND POLITICAL FIGURES, AS WELL AS "RESERVATIONS" ON BELGIAN POLICY TOWARDS ZAIRE FROM IMPORTANT SECTORS. (ONKELINX SAID THAT MOBUTU HAD IN MIND HERE ATTACKS ON HIM BY SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS KARL VAN MIERT AND ANDRE COOLS AND UNFRIENDLY NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS).

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--- BELGIUM'S USE OF PARATROOPS IN SHABA IN A MANNER THAT IGNORED ZAIRE'S "SOVEREIGNTY AND DIGNITY". MOBUTU TOLD SIMONET THAT THE GOZ WAS "INFORMED" OF BELGIAN INTENTIONS TO MOUNT A RESCUE OPERATION IN KOLWEZI AND THEN THE BELGIANS "DID WHAT THEY WANTED", FAILING TO CONSULT WITH OR EVEN INFORM THE GOZ OR THE FAZ THROUGHOUT THE SHABA OPERATION. IN CONTRAST, MOBUTU CONTINUED, FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD FIRST ASKED PERMISSION AND THEN TELEPHONED HIM FREQUENTLY AND EXCHANGED VIEWS. FURTHER, FRENCH TROOPS, UNLIKE THEIR BELGIAN COUNTERPARTS, WERE NOMINALLY PUT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF FAZ COMMANDERS.

--- ZAIRIAN EXILE ACTIVITIES IN BELGIUM, INCLUDING EASY ACCESS TO BELGIAN INFORMATION MEDIA, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT OWNED RADIO AND TV.

--- BELGIAN TECHNICIANS TO KOLWEZI. USING FRENCH COMPARISON AGAIN, MOBUTU TOLD SIMONET THAT BELGIAN TECHNICIANS, INCLUDING TRADE UNIONS, WERE PUTTING "CONDITIONS" ON THEIR RETURN TO KOLWEZI

(SECURITY) WHILE GECAMINES BOSS UMBA, CURRENTLY IN PARIS ON A RECRUITING MISSION, REPORTED THAT FRENCH TECHNICIANS ARE DEMANDING NO PRE-CONDITIONS FOR RETURNING TO KOLWEZI.

--- THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ATMOSPHERE. ONKELINX SAID THAT MOBUTU, UMBA AND OTHERS ASSERTED REPEATEDLY THAT THEY DO NOT FEEL "WELCOME" WHEN THEY VISIT BELGIUM. SOME CITED RUDENESS AND POLICE HARASSMENT. UMBA SAID THAT, AS SOON AS HE CHECKS INTO A PARIS HOTEL ROOM, THE QUAI D'ORSAY OR THE ELYSEE IS ON THE PHONE SEEKING TO BE HELPFUL AND SETTING UP APPOINTMENTS.

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4. ONKELINX SAID THE BELGIANS CONSIDER THAT ON BALANCE THE ZAIRIAN GRIPE SESSION WAS USEFUL IN THAT IT CLEARED THE AIR BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND BETWEEN MOBUTU AND SIMONET. HE SAID BRUSSELS WILL TRY TO HANDLE ZAIRIAN SENSITIVITIES BETTER IN THE FUTURE. HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT SIMONET DID NOT GO TO KINSHASA AS A PETITIONER. IN THE PAST, BELGIUM SOMETIMES HAD TO "PAY A PRICE", USUALLY IN TERMS OF AID OR DEBT RELIEF, FOR RECONCILIATION WITH MOBUTU. THIS TIME SIMONET CAME WITH

"NOTHING NEW" FOR THE GOZ.

5. ONKELINX SAID THAT SIMONET TOLD ZAIRIANS THAT 18 YEARS AFTER INDEPENDENCE OF THE CONGO, BELGIUM WANTED AN "ADULT RELATIONSHIP" WITH ZAIRE. HE SAID BELGIUM DID NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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SEEK NEO-COLONIALIST MONOPOLY OR SPECIAL PRIVILEGE; ALL IT WANTS IS "EQUAL TREATMENT" WITH OTHER NATIONS AND NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST BELGIUM.

6. REFORM AND MOBUTU PLAN. ONKELINX SAID THAT MOBUTU TOLD SIMONET THAT ZAIRE WANTS BELGIUM TO CONTINUE TO PLAY A COORDINATING ROLE IN IMPLEMENTING THE MOBUTU PLAN. HE ASIED THAT ACTIVE PREPARATION GO FORWARD FOR THE OCTOBER FOLLOW-UP MEETING ON ZAIRE TO BE HELD IN BRUSSELS. HE SAID SIMONET MADE CLEAR THAT BELGIAN AFRICAN POLICY IN GENERAL AND POLICY TOWARDS ZAIRE, WAS BASED IN BELGIAN CONSULTATION WITH BELGIAN, EUROPEAN AND WESTERN PARTNERS, THE LATEST EXAMPLES OF WHICH WERE THE PARIS AND BRUSSELS MEETINGS ON ZAIRE. ONKELINX SAID THAT BELGIANS CAME AWAY FROM KINSHASA WITH A "GOOD IMPRESSION" OF GOZ FORWARD MOVEMENT ON REFORMS, CITING PROGRESS ON THE IMF STABILIZATION PLAN AS WELL AS THE IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF THE IMF BANK DIRECTOR AND THE UNDP-PROVIDED FINANCE MINISTRY ORDONNATEUR.

7. POLITICAL REFORMS. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUESTION ABOUT DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL REFORMS (PARA 4C, REFTEL A), ONKELINX SAID THAT THE BELGIAN'S FOCUSSED ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC REFORMS AND THAT DISCUSSION OF POLITICAL REFORMS WAS CURSORY. HE SAID SIMONET EXPRESSED SATISFACTION FOR GOZ AMNESTY POLICY AND FOR RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ANGOLA. HE SAID MOBUTU COMPLAINED THAT ZAIRIAN EXILES WERE NOT RETURNING TO ZAIRE AND POINTED OUT TO SIMONET THAT NGUZA WAS FREE AND VISABLE ON THE STREETS OF KINSHASA. ON ANGOLA, ONKELINX SAID MOBUTU EXPRESSED TO SIMONET HIS "GOOD WILL" TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA AND WAS PLEASED WITH THE POSITIVE OUTCOME OF THE BRAZZAVILLE TALKS. HE SAID UMBA TOLD THE BELGIANS IT CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS TOO EARLY TO DISCUSS COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONING OF THE BORDER CONTROL COMMISSION.

8. ZAMBIAN BORDER SITUATION. ONKELINX SAID SIMONET

RAISED IDEA OF INCLUSION OF ZAMBIA IN ZAIRE-ANGOLA
BORDER CONTROL SCHEMES ALONG THE LINES OF DAS WALKER'S
DISCUSSION WITH BELGIUM DCM (REF B). ONKELINX SAID
THAT MOBUTU REACTED NEGATIVELY WITHOUT SAYING FLATLY NO.
HE REMINDED SIMONET THAT ZAMBIAN TERRITORY HAD BEEN
USED TO LAUNCH THE SHABA INVASION AND ADDED SOME UNKIND
REMARKS ABOUT KAUNDA.

9. BENGUELA RAILROAD. (PARA 2F, REF B). SIMONET
ASKED ABOUT A POSSIBLE GOS APPROACH TO SAVIMBI THAT
UNITA ALLOW REOPENING OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD. MOBUTU
TOLD SIMONET HE DID NOT RULE OUT SUCH AN APPROACH. UMBA
LATER TOLD CAHEN AND ONKELINX THAT SUCH AN EFFORT WAS
DOOMED SINCE EVEN IF UNITA AGREED TO LET THE LINE REOPEN,
THE ANGOLANS THEMSELVES WOULD SABOTAGE IT AND BLAME UNITA.

10. ONKELINX SAID THAT THE PAN AFRICAN FORCE WAS NOT
DISCUSSED. HE SAID THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO LOGISTICAL
COORDINATION TALKS SINCE THE PARIS MEETING. HE SAID
KING HASSAN WAS EXPECTED TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH
SIMONET IN RABAT AUGUST 4. CHAMBERS

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